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# Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards



Early education and care happens in many places: child care centers, family child care homes, Head Start programs, preschools and kindergartens. When children receive quality early childhood education and care, everyone benefits: children, families and communities.

# **WISCONSIN MODEL EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS**

## **WITH INTRODUCTION**

October 2003  
First Printing

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Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development  
Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services  
Head Start State Collaboration Project  
Early Childhood Collaborating Partners

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Wisconsin Department of  
Workforce Development



Wisconsin Department of  
Public Instruction



Wisconsin Department of  
Health and Family Services

October 1, 2003

Greetings!

Our departments are committed to quality early childhood education and care activities in child care, Head Start, and school programs throughout Wisconsin. We believe these programs provide the foundation for successful education, employment, and life experiences for citizens of this state. We have endorsed the work of Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners as a strategy to bring together the variety of programs serving young children and their families to create a blended system of services that are high quality and accessible to all who desire them. Because of this history of cross-department collaboration specifically related to early childhood, we endorse the new Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards.

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards are derived from research in all the domains of a child's early learning and development and apply to all settings in which children receive care and education. They were developed by the Early Learning Standards Steering Committee, composed of representatives from the state departments of Public Instruction, Health and Family Services, and Workforce Development; the Head Start State Collaboration Office; and Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners. The group incorporated current work in school districts and child care and Head Start programs in Wisconsin as well as other states. The work was guided by research in the field and supported by content experts from institutions of higher education in the state. These early learning standards are intended to align to Wisconsin's K-12 Model Academic Standards and to provide early learning opportunities that support children's success in school and the future.

This first printing of the Early Learning Standards is intended for wide distribution. We hope you will use the standards in your early childhood education and care programs and provide comments to the committee based on your experience. Feedback forms are provided in the back of the document. We recognize that publishing the standards is an important step in our on-going efforts to ensure that all children in the state have early childhood experiences that prepare them for the future. We believe that using these standards will contribute to the quality of care and education children receive.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Elizabeth Burmaster'.

Elizabeth Burmaster, Superintendent  
Department of Public Instruction

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Roberta Gassman'.

Roberta Gassman, Secretary  
Department of Workforce Development

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading 'Helene Nelson'.

Helene Nelson, Secretary  
Department of Health and Family Services



# Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards

## Introduction

### I. Defining the Early Learning Standards

**What are early learning standards?** Early learning standards specify developmental expectations for children upon kindergarten completion supported by practice-based evidence and scientific research. They include performance standards and provide a framework for the development of program standards and assessment practices. Children who meet the developmental expectations outlined in the Early Learning Standards will be prepared to master Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards.

- *Developmental domains* refer to discrete areas of development during the early childhood period.
- *Developmental expectations* refer to what young children should know and be able to do, within the expected wide variability of development that occurs in the early childhood period.
- *Performance standards* tell how we will know that young children are meeting developmental expectations.
- *Program standards* refer to what programs must do to ensure children have the opportunities and experiences needed to meet developmental expectations.

**Why are early learning standards necessary?** Early learning standards provide a shared framework for understanding and communicating expectations for young children's development. They are a guide for parents, professionals, and policymakers, all of whom share responsibility for the well being of young children. Early learning standards promote beneficial connections between early childhood and K-12 educational experiences.

**Why are early learning standards important?** Families, early care and education professionals, community institutions, and policymakers all share accountability for the optimal development of young children. These standards provide a framework of developmentally appropriate expectations for young children that can guide their work in creating, evaluating, and improving the conditions necessary for children's optimal development. As a result, young children will have more opportunities for positive development and learning.

**Why does Wisconsin need its own early learning standards?** These standards reflect the shared values and commitments of the citizens of Wisconsin to prepare young children for success in school. They reflect attention to all the domains of a child's early learning and development and recognize that these domains are interrelated and interdependent.



### II. Developing the Early Learning Standards

**How were Wisconsin's Early Learning Standards developed?** The process used to develop the Early Learning Standards reflects a continuing dialogue between shared values and commitments on one hand and, on the other, the desire to develop challenging and meaningful standards that reflect best practices and new knowledge gleaned from research and evidence. In this initial development process, professionals from across the state contributed to content area discussions that resulted in these standards. The content development process involved several phases.

The first phase involved development of *Guiding Principles*, developmental expectations, performance standards, and general program standard statements. This phase was guided by the Early Learning Standards Steering Committee, composed of representatives from the state departments of Public Instruction, Health and Family Services, and Workforce Development; the Head Start State Collaboration Office; and Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners. In addition, a survey of state standards from across the nation was conducted, and local standards currently in place in school districts within the state were consulted.

In the second phase, professionals from across the state acted as key informants, providing guidance and recommendations on standard content. These individuals included:

- School district-based early childhood and special education resource teachers;
- Head Start program managers and directors;
- Representatives of the Elementary School Principals' Association;
- Kindergarten teachers;
- Family and center-based child care program administrators/providers; and
- Educators from the University of Wisconsin System (UW-Madison, UW-Extension, and UW-LaCrosse).



Finally, focus groups of content experts assisted in the refinement of performance and program standard content and reviewed their conceptual alignment with the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards. These individuals included many of those who participated in the early focus groups as well as additional representatives from across the state.

The remaining phase begins with the distribution of the Early Learning Standards and the gathering of feedback on their applicability in the variety of settings. This will be accomplished utilizing the feedback form found in the back of this document.

Related efforts include the collaboration with several other professional development initiatives within the state initiatives.

**Who wrote the early learning standards and what resources were used?** The developmental expectations and performance standards within each domain were drafted by a consultant under the direction of the Early Learning Standards Steering Committee in collaboration with early childhood educators. The developmental domains, expectations, and standards reflect a survey of the scientific literature and practice-based evidence on child development. National and regional guidelines were also consulted, including those of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), Head Start Child Outcomes, and National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). Finally, a national survey of early learning standards informed this work.

### III. Using the Early Learning Standards

**What is the intended use of the Early Learning Standards?** The Early Learning Standards are voluntary and applicable across all early learning environments, including child care, Head Start, and public and private preschool programs. Broadly speaking, their intended purpose is:

- to educate and provide guidance for families, educators/caregivers, administrators, and policymakers on developmental expectations for children in the early childhood period (in particular, the preschool period from age three through five years, before mandatory school enrollment); and
- to inform the development of program standards across early learning environments.

In tandem with the *Guiding Principles* listed at the end of this introduction, the Early Learning Standards establish a framework applicable across all early learning environments, with the following intended uses:

- Educate families by informing them about the development of young children.
- Guide the development of parent education activities and investments in parent education programs.
- Improve quality across all early learning environments.

- Guide professional development activities and investments.
- Inform educators and caregivers in their approaches to curriculum development across all early learning environments.
- Provide a unifying framework for resource investments and advocacy in early care and education.
- Ease transitions for children and families across early learning environments and elementary school settings by establishing a shared framework aligned with Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards.
- Serve as a basis for community partnerships and collaborations, unifying those who spend their days with children and those who advocate on behalf of these children.

**Must a school district or other formal early learning environment, such as preschool and child care programs, adopt the Early Learning Standards?** No. The Early Learning Standards are voluntary, not mandatory.

**How would a school district or other early care and education program use the Early Learning Standards?** These standards can be used as guides for developing/adopting curriculum content, including instructional methods and materials, assessment practices, and for planning professional development opportunities.

**What is the difference between Early Learning Standards and curriculum?** The Early Learning Standards are statements that reflect widely held expectations about what children should know and be able to do upon kindergarten completion. They also provide performance standards, by which children may demonstrate that they meet expectations, and general program standard statements, by which teachers and caregivers can demonstrate that they provide the opportunities and experiences children need to meet developmental expectations. Curriculum reflects the practices that support children's early learning and development and is a component of program standards.

**How do the Early Learning Standards relate to Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards?** The Early Learning Standards align with Wisconsin's Model Academic Standards in their comprehensive focus on developmentally appropriate expectations for the early childhood period from age three through age five. Research indicates that children who meet expectations in these developmental domains will be successful in mastering academic standards. As such, the Early Learning Standards provide a foundation for the Model Academic Standards.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The numbering system used to enumerate the performance standards reflects that used in the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards, where the first letter refers to the developmental expectation and EL refers to Early Learning. These standards reflect expectations for a typically developing child at kindergarten completion or through age five.

**How do we apply the Early Learning Standards to children in the age group covered?** The performance standards as stated are general enough to apply across the targeted age range. Proficiency expectations in each performance standard will vary by age. Districts can use the Early Learning Standards to further develop age-specific benchmarks or proficiency expectations.

**How do the Early Learning Standards relate to the assessment of the development of young children?**

By setting appropriate expectations for young children in the five domains of early learning and development, the Early Learning Standards set the stage for the development of appropriate curriculum and the use of assessment practices that support and promote children's learning and development. Assessment practices are a component of program standards.

Appropriate assessment practices for young children take into account the following considerations:

- Young children learn in ways and at rates different from older children.
- Young children come to know things through doing as well as through listening and often represent their knowledge better by showing than by telling.
- Young children's development and learning is rapid, uneven and episodic, so that point-in time assessments do not give a complete picture of their learning.
- Young children's achievements are the result of a complex mix of their ability to learn and their past learning opportunities.

Resources on appropriate assessment practices for young children are listed at the end of this document.

#### **IV. Relating the Early Learning Standards to All Young Children**

**To what age group do the Early Learning Standards apply?** The Early Learning Standards apply to children through age five, or the end of kindergarten. This reflects the transition to mandatory school enrollment at age six. Typically, most children attain the developmental expectations within this time frame, though there is individual variability.

**Are all children expected to achieve the skills and competencies described in the Early Learning Standards?** The Early Learning Standards recognize that children are individuals who, though they typically develop in similar stages and sequences, have diverse patterns of behavior and learning that emerge as a result of the interaction of several factors. These factors include:

- genetic predisposition (including individual temperament, inclinations and talents) and physical characteristics;
- socio-economic status (including access to educational opportunities, health, nutrition, and care); and
- the values, beliefs, and cultural and political practices of their families and communities.
- Because brain development and social-emotional development are most active in the early years of a child's life, all of the child's experiences are of critical importance to the child and our society. As such, these standards support the development of optimal learning experiences that can be adapted in response to the individual developmental patterns of children.

**Are children with developmental delays or disabilities expected to achieve the skills and competencies described in the Early Learning Standards?**

Children with developmental delays and disabilities vary as much as all children do in the factors that influence their patterns of behavior and learning, including temperament, personality, and family culture. The Early Learning Standards provide a basis for establishing meaningful goals in response to each child's developmental progress and demonstration of proficiency and serve as a foundation for individualized programming decisions for young children with identified developmental delays and disabilities.

Individually identified and implemented accommodations and modifications may be necessary for young children with disabilities as they master the skills and competencies related to the Early Learning Standards. School districts and other early learning settings may adopt, adapt, or develop their own standards and multiple measures for determining proficiencies, assuring greater accountability for progress for young children with disabilities.

**What is the relationship of the Early Learning Standards to school readiness?** Conditions necessary for school readiness include family and community supports, quality early learning environments, and receptive schools. Children's development is enhanced, or compromised, by the quality of these conditions. The Early Learning Standards describe expected child developmental outcomes and provide general program standard statements that, when expanded and applied, can ensure that early learning environments are responsive to children's developmental needs.

# Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards

## V. Guiding Principles

The Early Learning Standards Advisory Committee has established the following *Guiding Principles* to inform the development and application of Early Learning Standards in Wisconsin. These guiding principles reflect the knowledge base in scientific research, our values, and our commitment to young children and families.

1. **All children are capable and competent.** Development and learning begins at birth, for all children and in all settings. The Early Learning Standards support practices that promote development and protect young children from the harm that results from inappropriate expectations. In this, they are aligned with ethical principles of the early childhood profession.
2. **A child's early learning and development is multidimensional.** Developmental domains are highly interrelated. The Early Learning Standards reflect the interconnectedness of the domains of children's development: social and emotional development, approaches to learning, language development and communication, health and physical development, and cognition and general knowledge.
3. **Expectations for children must be guided by knowledge of child growth and development.** The Early Learning Standards are based on research about the processes and sequences of young children's learning and development, and the conditions under which children develop to their fullest potential.



4. **Children are individuals who develop at various rates.** The Early Learning Standards recognize that there are individual rates of development and learning across any age range.
5. **Children are members of cultural groups that share developmental patterns.** The Early Learning Standards acknowledge that children's development and learning opportunities reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of children, families and environments.
6. **Children exhibit a range of skills and competencies within any domain of development.** The Early Learning Standards support the development of optimal learning experiences that can be adapted for individual developmental patterns.
7. **Children learn through play and the active exploration of their environment.** The Early Learning Standards reflect the belief that children should be provided with opportunities to explore and apply new skills through child-initiated and teacher-initiated activities, and through interactions with peers, adults and materials. Teachers and families can best guide learning by providing these opportunities in natural, authentic contexts.
8. **Parents are children's primary and most important caregivers and educators.** Families, communities and schools all have significant roles to play in terms of what opportunities are available to children, and how well a child is able to advantage of those learning opportunities.

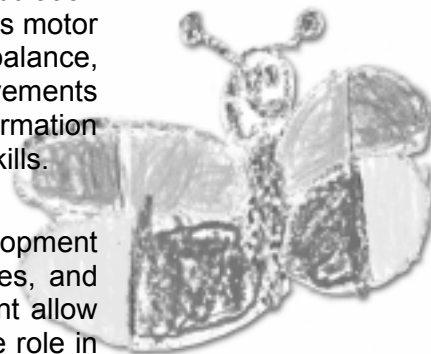
# Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards

## I. HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Health encompasses emerging knowledge and practices related to health, safety, and nutrition that promote physical well being. Physical development encompasses rate of growth and muscle control (motor development). Fine motor control, or small-muscle movement, refers to such abilities as manipulation of materials and tools, hand dominance, and eye-hand coordination. Gross motor control, or large-muscle movement, refers to such characteristics as balance, coordination, purposeful control, locomotion, and stability of body movements and functions. Sensory motor control refers to the ability to take in information from the senses to inform muscle response and includes self-regulatory skills.

### Rationale

Children's future health and well being are directly related to the development and strengthening of their large and small muscles, sensory experiences, and practicing healthy behavior. Good physical health and motor development allow for full participation in learning experiences. When children take an active role in caring for their bodies, maintaining a clean and healthy environment, and preparing food, they feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in their independence.



### A. PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL BEING<sup>2</sup>

#### Developmental Expectation

*Children in Wisconsin will be physically active, physically healthy, and effectively care for their physical well being.*

#### Performance Standards

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- A.EL.1 Self-care routines
- A.EL.2 Safety rules and directions
- A.EL.3 Components of a healthy lifestyle, including nutrition, exercise, rest, and the role of health-care providers
- A.EL.4 Use of multi-sensory abilities to process information

#### Program Standard

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide increasingly complex and diverse opportunities for children to understand and care for their physical well being.

## B. MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

#### Developmental Expectation

*Children in Wisconsin will effectively master the use of small and gross motor skills to advance their learning and to achieve optimal physical health.*

#### Performance Standards

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- B.EL.1 Strength, control, balance, coordination, locomotion, and endurance
- B.EL.2 Hand-eye coordination, strength, control, and object manipulation
- B.EL.3 Use of their senses to take in, experience, integrate, and regulate responses to their environment

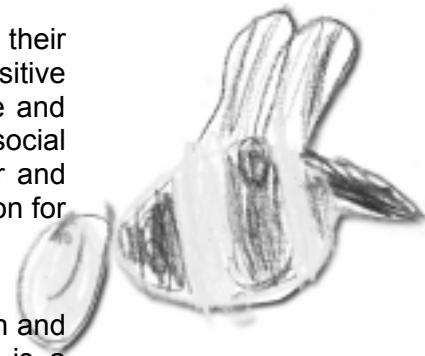
#### Program Standard

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide increasingly complex and diverse opportunities for children to develop their small and gross motor skills and to use their senses to integrate and act on their environment.

<sup>2</sup> The numbering system used to enumerate the performance standards reflects that used in the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards, where the first letter refers to the developmental expectation and EL refers to Early Learning. These standards reflect expectations for a typically developing child at kindergarten completion or through age five.

## II. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This domain includes children's feelings about themselves and others, their ability to form relationships, interest in and skills needed to maintain positive relationships with adults and children, ability to understand the perspective and feelings of others, and skills needed to succeed in a group setting. Healthy social and emotional competence is developed from infancy, through the toddler and preschool years, and beyond. Children's early relationships are the foundation for social and emotional competence and cognitive development.



### Rationale

Social and emotional development is an ongoing process of skills acquisition and mastery, involving emotions, perception, cognition, and language. There is a direct relationship between a child's social and emotional well being and overall success in school and life. Emotional development is a complex process, involving range and intensity of emotional reactions, perception of emotions in self and others, emotional self-regulation, and behavioral expressions of emotions. Emotional development occurs through the interactions of a child's temperament in the context of relationship and experience. Self-concept refers to a child's developing awareness of self in relation to others, sense of well being, and trust that he or she has a right to a place in the world. Children are dependent upon their interactions with adults and peers to construct a sense of self. Social competence is a culturally determined construct that includes the self-regulation needed to succeed in social settings.

### A. EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### ***Developmental Expectation***

*Children in Wisconsin will be emotionally healthy.*

#### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- A.EL.1 Expressing a wide range of emotions in a variety of settings (pretend, play, drawing, dancing, etc.)
- A.EL.2 Seeking adult interaction as needed for emotional support, physical assistance, social interaction, and approval
- A.EL.3 Self-control
- A.EL.4 Use of words to communicate emotions
- A.EL.5 Understanding and responding to others emotions

#### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and opportunities for children to develop emotional competence.

### B. SELF-CONCEPT

#### ***Developmental Expectation***

*Children in Wisconsin will have a sense of personal well being.*

#### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- B.EL.1 Self-esteem
- B.EL.2 Self-direction in choices and actions
- B.EL.3 Self-awareness, including abilities, characteristics, and preferences
- B.EL.4 Creative self-expression
- B.EL.5 Willingness to make needs known and to trust in others
- B.EL.6 Views self as a teacher/learner

#### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and opportunities for children to develop and strengthen their sense of personal well being.

## II. SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT (Continued)

### C. SOCIAL COMPETENCE

### ***Developmental Expectation***

*Children in Wisconsin will be socially competent in early learning environments.*

## Performance Standards

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- C.EL.1 Interacting with one or more other children
- C.EL.2 Seeking out peers as play partners
- C.EL.3 Participating successfully as a member of a group
- C.EL.4 Using words and other positive strategies to resolve conflicts
- C.EL.5 Understanding when and how to ask for adult help

## Program Standard

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and opportunities for children to develop social competence.

### Notes and Comments

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### III. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION

This domain refers to children's developing ability to convey and interpret meaning. This is reflected in their progress in acquiring language skills in the areas of listening and understanding, speaking and communicating, and early literacy. Language development occurs in the context of relationships, moves children along the continuum of early literacy, and encompasses all forms of communication, both verbal and nonverbal.

#### Rationale

Language has an essential impact on the rapid development of a child's brain that occurs during the first years of life. Children increase their language and communication skills by engaging in meaningful experiences with adults and peers that require them to effectively express their ideas and feelings, listen, and understand others. Children learn to communicate in a variety of ways, such as using symbols; combining their oral language, pictures, print, and play into a coherent mixed medium; and creating and communicating meanings in a variety of ways.

Early experiences define children's assumptions and expectations about becoming literate as they learn that reading and writing are valuable tools. Long before they can exhibit reading and writing production skills, children acquire basic understandings of concepts about literacy and its functions. Regular and active interactions with print, in books and in the environment, allow children to consolidate this information into patterns, essential for later development in reading and writing. Acquiring these skills and competencies is of central concern, not the language in which they are acquired. Children whose home language is not English may demonstrate these skills in their primary language before they do so in English.



#### A. LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING

##### **Developmental Expectation**

*Children in Wisconsin will convey and interpret meaning through listening and understanding.*

##### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- A.EL.1 Deriving meaning from verbal and nonverbal cues
- A.EL.2 Listening with understanding to stories, books, directions, and conversations
- A.EL.3 Following directions of increasing complexity
- A.EL.4 Listening and responding to music and rhythm

##### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and opportunities for children to develop their abilities to listen and understand.

#### B. SPEAKING AND COMMUNICATING

##### **Developmental Expectation**

*Children in Wisconsin will convey and interpret meaning through speaking and other forms of communicating.*

##### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- B.EL.1 Communicating needs and thoughts through gestures, sounds, and/or words
- B.EL.2 Using increasingly complex and varied vocabulary and language structure
- B.EL.3 Using speech understandable to familiar and unfamiliar listeners

##### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and opportunities for children to develop their abilities to speak and communicate.

### C. EARLY LITERACY

*Children in Wisconsin will have the literacy skills and concepts needed to prepare them to learn to read and write.*

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- C.EL.1 Understanding concepts of print (book and print awareness)
- C.EL.2 Using a variety of strategies to derive meaning from a text
- C.EL.3 Alphabetic awareness
- C.EL.4 Phonological awareness
- C.EL.5 Understanding language structure
- C.EL.6 Associating sounds with written letters
- C.EL.7 Understanding and use of writing to represent thoughts or ideas
- C.EL.8 Understanding increasingly complex and varied vocabulary used in language and the environment

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and opportunities for children to develop literacy concepts and skills.

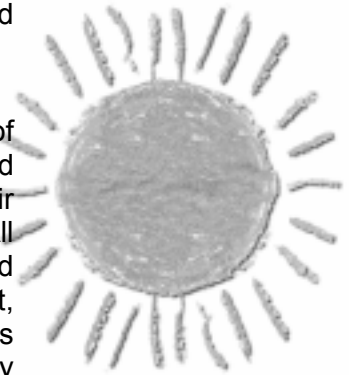
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## IV. APPROACHES TO LEARNING

This domain, the one most subject to individual variation, recognizes that children approach learning in different ways and emphasizes the development of positive attitudes and dispositions to acquire information. It is inclusive of a child's curiosity about the world and openness to new tasks and challenges; initiative, task persistence, and attentiveness; reflection and interpretation; imagination and invention; and cognitive skills.

### Rationale

The acquisition of knowledge, skills, and capacities is an insufficient criterion of developmental success. Children must be *inclined* to marshal such skills and capacities. The way young children approach learning is influenced by their sociocultural environment as well as by individual temperament and gender. All children can and do acquire knowledge. Their ability to integrate information and to demonstrate what they know varies based on their cognitive development, social and emotional development, and physical development. Children's approaches to learning are often determined by their openness to and curiosity about new tasks and challenges, task persistence and attentiveness, reflection and interpretation of experiences, imagination and invention, and individual temperament. Approaches to learning encompass attitudes, habits, and learning styles, with a focus on experiences and opportunities that foster children's taking the initiative to direct their own learning.



### A. CURIOSITY, ENGAGEMENT, AND PERSISTENCE

#### **Developmental Expectation**

*Children in Wisconsin will be curious and open to new tasks and challenges, using initiative, task persistence, and attentiveness to extend their learning.*

#### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- A.EL.1 Discovering and trying new things
- A.EL.2 Extending learning through attempting, repeating, experimenting, refining, and elaborating on an activity
- A.EL.3 Persistence in working on an activity

#### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and diverse opportunities for children to extend their learning through curiosity, engagement, and persistence.

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### B. INVENTION AND IMAGINATION

#### **Developmental Expectation**

*Children in Wisconsin will use invention and imagination to extend their learning.*

#### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- B.EL.1 Trying new things and taking risks
- B.EL.2 Problem-solving using a variety of strategies
- B.EL.3 Using complex scenarios in pretend play
- B.EL.4 Exploring movement, music, and a variety of artistic media

#### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and diverse opportunities for children to extend their learning through use of invention and imagination.

### C. COGNITIVE SKILLS

*Children in Wisconsin will develop their capacity to use cognitive skills as a tool to acquire knowledge and skills. These skills include reasoning, reflection, and interpretation.*

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- C.EL.1 Thinking about, relating and asking questions about events and experiences, using progressively more complex language structure
- C.EL.2 Learning from experience
- C.EL.3 Linking new learning with past learning
- C.EL.4 Generalizing and adjusting to new learning and experiences

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and increasingly complex opportunities for children to extend their learning by using cognitive skills as a tool to acquire knowledge and skills.

[illegible]

## V. COGNITION AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

This domain recognizes children's search for meaning as the basis for intellectual development. The components focus on children's curiosity about the world and their developing ability to acquire, organize, and use information in increasingly complex ways to satisfy that curiosity. Children are engaged in and appreciate the arts as an organizing framework for expressing ideas and feelings. Primary components include mathematics and logical thinking, scientific thinking and problem-solving, and understanding social systems.

### Rationale

Children acquire knowledge by linking prior experiences to new learning situations. As a child applies and extends prior knowledge to new experiences, he or she refines concepts or forms new ones. Cognition is a fluid process by which children use thinking skills to conceptually develop a construct of the world, thus enabling active learning. General knowledge is a product of cognition, which expands and grows through learning and self-expression.



### A. MATHEMATICAL AND LOGICAL THINKING

#### **Developmental Expectation**

*Children in Wisconsin will understand and use early mathematical concepts and logical thinking processes to extend their learning.*

#### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- A.EL.1 Group and arrange objects in a series and recognize similarity/relationships
- A.EL.2 Count, join, separate, and tell how many
- A.EL.3 Recognize and use numerals to represent quantity
- A.EL.4 Understand words that locate an object in relation to its environment, put together progressively more difficult puzzles, and recognize and create two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional objects
- A.EL.5 Understand the concept of measurement
- A.EL.6 Collect, describe, and record information using all senses

#### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide a supportive context and increasingly complex opportunities for children to extend their learning through the use of mathematical and logical thinking processes.

### B. SCIENTIFIC THINKING AND PROBLEM SOLVING

#### **Developmental Expectation**

*Children in Wisconsin will understand and use scientific tools and skills to extend their learning.*

#### **Performance Standards**

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- B.EL.1 Use their senses to observe characteristics and behaviors in the physical world
- B.EL.2 Use tools to gather information, compare observed objects, and seek answers to questions through active investigation
- B.EL.3 Hypothesize and make predictions
- B.EL.4 Form explanations based on trial and error, observations, and explorations

#### **Program Standard**

Early care and education programs in Wisconsin will provide the environment, context, and increasingly complex opportunities for children to extend their learning through the use of scientific reasoning and problem solving.

## C. SOCIAL SYSTEMS UNDERSTANDING

*Children in Wisconsin will understand the characteristics and structures of social systems.*

During the early childhood period, children in Wisconsin will show evidence of developmentally appropriate abilities in the following areas:

- ## Program Standard

## Notes and Comments



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# Feedback Form

## WISCONSIN MODEL EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

Please submit this feedback form to the child care section of the Department of Workforce Development

The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards is a joint project of the Wisconsin Departments of Workforce Development, Public Instruction, and Health and Family Services. They are designed to align with the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards and to promote the early learning experiences vital for success in school and later life. Your feedback is vital for the ongoing implementation of the early learning standards in our state.

Please provide comment based on your experience with implementing the Early Learning Standards. Identify the corresponding page number and any suggested language revisions.

- Specific comments can also be focused on: are the standards understandable and are they useful as a guide to develop curriculum?

All comments will be reviewed by the Standards Steering Committee and compared to best practices as identified through early learning research and practice-based evidence. The Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards will be revised as determined appropriate.

Additional information regarding the early learning standards is available on the following website:  
[www.collaboratingpartners.com](http://www.collaboratingpartners.com).

Name (Optional):	Job Title:		
Program:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Center	<input type="checkbox"/> Child Care Home	<input type="checkbox"/> School	<input type="checkbox"/> Early Childhood Special Education
<input type="checkbox"/> Head Start Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Kindergarten	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (describe)	
Area Code/Phone Number (Optional)	Circle the Age of Children You Work With		
	3      4      5		

I. Are the Standards understandable? ☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No  
Comments:

II. Are the Standards useful? ☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No  
Comments:

III. Are you able to use the Standards as a guide to develop curriculum and daily activities for your program?  
☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No      Comments:

IV. Are you able to use the Standards to guide you in on-going assessment of children's progress?  
☐ Yes ☐ Somewhat ☐ No      Comments:

On the following page is a chart that can be used to provide comment regarding specific areas within the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards. **Written comment will be accepted through April 30, 2004.** All revisions made to the Early Learning Standards will reflect developmentally appropriate practices and will be verified

through early care and education research. Revisions are expected to be completed during Summer 2004, with the updated standards available through the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners website. Feel free to attach extra pages if needed. Thank you for your assistance.

OVER

Page No.	Section or Domain	Specific Comment	Specific Suggested Change

What additional guidance or resources would be helpful for you to implement these early learning standards with your children?

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Feel free to copy and distribute this form and the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards to colleagues and other stakeholders for review.

**Please fax this form to: 608.261.6968, or**

**Mail to:**

**Department of Workforce Development, Child Care Section**

**Katherine McGurk**

**201 E. Washington Ave., P.O. Box 7972**

**Madison, WI 53707-7972, or**

**Return by email to: [kathy.mcgurk@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:kathy.mcgurk@dwd.state.wi.us)**







## Quality early education and care matters.

- Learning begins at birth.
- Over 79% of young children spend time in early education and care outside their homes.
- Caregivers/teachers trained in early education are critical to building young minds.
- The opportunities we provide to all children today shape who they will become tomorrow.



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